

July 2006

The Honorable Christine Gregoire
Governor of the State of Washington
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

SUBJECT: GJJAC 2005 Annual Juvenile Justice Report

Dear Governor Gregoire:

I am honored to present the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee's (GJJAC) 2005 Annual Report. It will provide you with a summary of the juvenile justice system in our State. It will also give you information on the characteristics of the young people who are involved, or at risk of becoming involved, in the juvenile justice system. Finally, it gives a picture of some of the current challenges affecting our young people and their communities. This is the most up-to-date summary on juvenile justice issues in Washington, and we hope it will be interesting and useful to you.

Preparation and dissemination of the Annual Report is one important way we fulfill our mission, which is "to promote partnerships and innovations that improve outcomes for juvenile offenders and their victims, to build family and community capacity to prevent delinquency, and to provide analysis and expertise to state and local policymakers." In terms of providing analysis and expertise to you, we offer not only the Annual Report but also our availability to act as a rich information source for any questions you have about the juvenile justice system or juvenile offenders. We are eager to provide information in the form that would be most helpful to you, including the latest research on best practices, summaries of current practices and programs, testimony at hearings or collaboration and outreach in our communities.

We believe that public policy is best when it is based on data and best practice research. We rely on evaluation results to determine how best to fund local programs through the Federal funds we receive and distribute. However, we also recognize that communities have unique and creative ideas about how to help their own young people become law-abiding and contributing adults. In these instances, we work closely with communities to help them frame their program ideas with solid research and carefully crafted evaluation plans. All best practice programs began with ideas, and we take seriously our responsibility to help communities move from the idea stage to the operation of robust and effective programs. This interaction with communities is one way we help advance our collective expertise and knowledge about effective strategies for addressing juvenile delinquency.

We also believe delinquency prevention is best addressed at the community level, with strategies that effectively engage the young person, the family and the community in coordinated efforts to reintegrate young offenders back into the mainstream. The effectiveness of prevention programs can be seen in the low rate of juvenile arrests Washington presently enjoys. Funding for prevention programs must be ensured so we can sustain our progress and continue to make improvements in offender rehabilitation and community safety.

Thank you for your work on behalf of the young people of Washington State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janice C. O'Mahony". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Janice" being more prominent.

Janice C. O'Mahony, Chair